

Good morning, all.

DNR has been operating under Tier 2 of its COVID-19 – Steps to a Safe Start plan since Jul 6, 2021. Now, with a fully vaccinated workforce, DNR intends to move to a modified Tier 3 and re-open its facilities to the public on Jan 3, 2022. Here are some main points around re-opening:

Facilities

- DNR intends to re-open its facilities to the public on Monday, Jan 3. This means facilities that were open to the public prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In some cases, the number of public entry points to a DNR facility may be reduced. “Open to the public” does not mean unrestricted access to all parts of a DNR facility; parts of DNR facilities may be secured and/or off-limits to public entry.
- At the Natural Resources Building (NRB), members of the public will no longer be issued card keys that allow them to operate the main elevators or enter secured areas of the building. All areas of the building except the rotunda and the parking levels will be secured. All members of the public with business at the NRB will be met in the rotunda by tenant-agency staff who will either transact business on the first floor or escort them to agency facilities on the upper floors.
- City Picnics will not initially resume operations. The cafeteria may be temporarily re-purposed to provide additional first-floor meeting space where tenant agencies can transact business with members of the public—this is being discussed. The first floor main hallway and meeting rooms will be secured; members of the public may be escorted into these areas by tenant agency representatives for business purposes. The restrooms on the first floor main hallway will not be available for public use except by those who have business at the NRB and have been escorted into this area by tenant agency staff. The two, single-stall restrooms in the rotunda will be available for public use.
- Open public meetings may resume in NRB conference room 172. All meeting participants will be masked; however, there will be no COVID-19 related room capacity or social distancing restrictions. A protocol is being developed to allow use of the restrooms at the west end of the first floor main hallway by open public meeting participants.
- DNR’s cleaning and disinfecting protocols will remain unchanged. Custodial cleaning schedules and protocols may be adjusted to address public entry into DNR facilities.

The Public

- DNR will not require members of the public entering DNR facilities to provide proof of vaccination, nor will DNR employees ask members of the public about their vaccination status.
- Consistent with state-level guidance, DNR will require members of the public entering a DNR facility to wear a protective face mask. DNR will provide disposable masks at public entry points for members of the public who arrive at a DNR facility without a mask. Protocols are being developed to address situations involving members of the public who cannot wear or refuse to wear a mask.

DNR Employees

- Coincident with re-opening, DNR will be lifting the 2/3 cap on re-occupancy of DNR facilities envisioned in Tier 3 of the original Steps to a Safe Start plan. DNR will staff its facilities at levels that support normal business interactions between DNR and members of the public. Not all DNR employees will be required to immediately return to their duty station. Specific staffing guidance will be provided by the Senior Leadership Team.
- All DNR employees will continue to perform daily COVID-19 self-screening before reporting to a DNR facility.

- DNR employees who interact with members of the public in a DNR facility will be masked when interacting with the public. DNR employees who are not interacting with the public will not be required to wear a mask or socially distance. However, all employees are welcome to continue to wear a mask as a personal preference.

*** These intentions and protocols may change as DNR adaptively implements its re-opening process.**

DNR's Safe Start Workgroup (SSG2) is monitoring the status of COVID-19 and direction provided by Department of Labor and Industries (LNI) and Office of Financial Management (OFM)/State Human Resources. To date, there has been no new direction for state agencies related to emergence of the COVID-19 omicron variant from LNI or OFM. SSG2 is meeting twice weekly to address re-opening needs and share information, and is communicating with the Senior Leadership Team.

DNR has notified Washington Federation of State Employees and Washington Public Employees Associations of its re-opening intentions and is having ongoing interaction with both unions.

Additional communications and updates will be forthcoming. Three Zoom information sessions are planned:

- Tuesday, Dec 21, 90-minutes
- Thursday, Dec 23, 90-minutes
- Wednesday, Jan 5, 90-minutes

Please feel free to reach out at any time to your chain-of-command, DNR Human Resources, or the DNR Safety Office if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Thank you for your continued attention to DNR's COVID-19 safety protocols as we move ahead; I am grateful for your efforts to keep DNR healthy and productive.

Sincerely,

Lenny

Lenny Young

Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Washington State Department of Natural Resources
360-628-4200
lenny.young@dnr.wa.gov
www.dnr.wa.gov